CNO calls diversity a strategic imperative

From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Mullen addressed a packed audience at the Naval Air Systems Command Total Force Diversity Day on June 29.

Mullen left no doubt about the importance of pursuing diversity at every level in the Navy, calling it a "strategic imperative" and reminding the attendees that the Navy is engaged around the globe.

"Having the cultural skills, having the diverse backgrounds in order to literally achieve our mission is really critical", said Mullen. "That is why [diversity] is a strategic imperative."

This level of engagement, he argued, requires a much better understanding of cultural norms and values than Sailors typically have right now.

While the CNO noted that the Navy has made great strides in improving diversity in recent years, the pace of globalization and the war on terrorism have made it necessary to renew those efforts and adopt change even faster.

"We've got to create a sense of urgency and a belief and a commitment," he said. "Leadership has to say it: 'We've got to change.'"

Mullen noted that the Navy has created a new Diversity Concept of Operations, which lays the groundwork for how the service will seek to improve both awareness and opportunities at all leadership levels.

Diversity, the CNO stressed, is about creating opportunities for all, not breaking down barriers for some.

And he pressed the audience hard to begin a healthy dialogue about the subject.

"Part of how we got here

CNO Adm. Mike Mullen

is because we're afraid to talk about the subject. We don't know how to talk about it. We've got to get over that.

Amongst friends, it's a challenging issue. We worry about ticking people off, about saying the wrong thing," he said.

Understanding one another's concerns was a vital first step to making progress, Mullen argued.

"I can't see diversity from a minority position," he noted. "I have not grown up in those shoes. I didn't live that way, and I need help understanding it. And I need understanding that that is the case, not an expectation that I would pick it up instantly."

Mullen also encouraged

leaders in the Navy to take on what he termed "accountable mentorship."

He argued that leaders must consider it a primary responsibility to ensure the success of those they mentor, aggressively tracking career milestones.

"As a mentor, it's my responsibility to make sure that individual makes it," he said. "We have got to get [diversity] right or it jeopardizes us as an institution. The Navy is my command," Mullen added, "and this is a big part of making sure we get it right."

Stolen VA laptop turned in to FBI

By Steven Donald Smith, American Forces Press Service

The stolen Department of Veterans Affairs laptop computer and hard drive containing the personal information of more than 26 million veterans were turned in to the FBI yesterday, the Veterans Affairs secretary said before Congress June 29.

Reports indicate that the FBI has made a preliminary determination that data contained on the computer and hard drive has not been accessed.

There have been no reports of identity theft or other criminal activity related to the stolen

computer, R. James Nicholson told the House Veterans Affairs Committee. He added that the VA would still honor its promise of free credit monitoring for a year.

An unnamed individual turned over the laptop and hard drive to FBI officials in Balti-

more. No persons are in custody at this time, officials said.

The laptop and hard drive were stolen from the Montgomery County, Md., home of a VA employee on May 3. Government officials do not believe the data on the laptop was the target of the burglary, and consider the break-in a random theft.

"This has brought to the light of day some real deficiencies in the manner we handled personal data," Nicholson said. "If there's a redeeming part of this, I think we can turn this around."

Oasis Teen Center summer schedule

July 17: Building computers, 1-3 p.m.

July 20 - 21: Free computer check-up, 1 - 3 p.m.

July 28: Picnic at Hospital Cay, 1 - 3 p.m.

July 29: Pool Party, 8 p.m - midnight

July 31: Pool Tournament, 1 - 3 p.m.

Aug. 8, 9, & 10: Amazing Race

Aug. 14-18: Bowling Tournament, 1 - 3 p.m.

Aug. 25 : Back-to-school dance

Aug. 26: Nickelodeon Family-Fun Day

For more information, call the Oasis Teen Center at 2096.